

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Original) A preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma, comprising HGF or a salt thereof as an active ingredient.

2. (Original) The preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma according to claim 1, wherein HGF is a peptide comprising an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2, a peptide comprising an amino acid sequence substantially identical to an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2, or a partial peptide thereof.

3. (Original) A preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma, comprising a DNA encoding HGF as an active ingredient.

4. (Original) The preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma according to claim 3, wherein the DNA encoding HGF is a DNA comprising a base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 3 or 4, or a base sequence which hybridizes with a base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 3 or 4 under highly stringent conditions.

5. (Previously presented) The preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma according to claim 3, wherein the DNA encoding HGF is inserted into a recombinant expression vector.

6. (Original) The preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma according to claim 5, wherein the recombinant expression vector is adeno-associated virus (AAV), adenovirus, retrovirus, poxvirus, herpesvirus, herpes simplex virus, lentivirus (HIV), sendaivirus, Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), vaccinia virus, poliovirus, sindbis virus, SV40, pCAGGS, pBK-CMV, pcDNA3.1 or pZeoSV.

7. (Previously presented) The preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma according to claim 5, wherein the recombinant expression vector is further contained in a host cell.

8. (Previously presented) The preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma according to claim 3, wherein the DNA encoding HGF, or the recombinant expression vector containing the DNA encoding HGF is contained in a liposome or a microcapsule.

9. (Previously presented) The preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma according to claim 1, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

10. (Currently amended) A method for preventing or treating asthma, comprising suppressing airway inflammation by administering an effective amount of hepatocyte growth factor (HGF) HGF or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof to a humana mammal.

11. (Original) A method for preventing or treating asthma, comprising suppressing airway inflammation by administering an effective amount of a DNA encoding HGF to a mammal.

12. (Previously presented) A method for preparing a preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma, which comprises mixing HGF or a salt thereof with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

13. (Previously presented) A method for preparing a preventive or therapeutic agent for asthma, which comprises inserting a DNA encoding HGF into a recombinant expression vector.

14. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein HGF is a peptide comprising an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2, a peptide comprising an amino acid sequence substantially identical to an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2, or a partial peptide thereof.

15. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein HGF is a peptide of an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 2.

16. (New) A method for suppressing an inflammation reaction in bronchial asthma, which comprises administering an effective amount of hepatocyte growth factor (HGF) or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof to a human.

17. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein HGF is administered intravenously at a dose of about 250 to 1000 $\mu\text{g/Kg/day}$.

18. (New) The method according to claim 16, wherein HGF is administered intravenously at a dose of about 250 to 1000 $\mu\text{g/Kg/day}$.

19. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein HGF or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof and a physiologically acceptable carrier are administered.

20. (New) The method according to claim 16, wherein HGF or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof and a physiologically acceptable carrier are administered.